ZAAAA
CFSHHHH

ナナ！？

IT'S NOW BEEN...

...1,014 DAYS SINCE OUR FIRST MEETING.

UGH...

...WHAT IS DRIVING THAT MAN ANYWAY?

TON (THNK)

HE CAN SEE HOW MUCH RAIN THERE IS.

ANY NORMAL CREATURE WOULD REST.

AND WHAT IF HE HURTS HIMSELF? HE IS HUMAN. A WEAKLING. HIS WOUNDS TAKE DAYS TO HEAL.

THAT IT'S TAKEN SHAPE IN SUCH A SHORT TIME...

...IS MAINLY THANKS TO MY TEACHING HIM ABOUT HOME BUILDING, I THINK.

STILL...

IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE HE BEGAN BUILDING THIS HOME...

HE'S PROVED TO BE SUCH A KLUTZ THE WHOLE TIME, IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN FOREVER.

OOP!

ZURU (WOBBLE)

GORO ゴロ

GORO (RUMBLE)

BY HUMAN STANDARDS, HE HAS UNDENIABLE SPIRIT.

GORO ゴ"

...ASSEM-BLING THE PIECES...

CHOPPING UP ALL HIS MATERIAL...

...BRING-ING IT OVER...

WHEW!

GOT A LOT OF WORK DONE TODAY.

ZA (CZSH)

THE RAIN'S GETTING STRONGER...

IT'S JUST ABOUT SUNSET TOO.

I THINK WE'RE JUST ABOUT DONE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? 'COS I THINK IT'S STARTING TO LOOK PRETTY—

YOU'RE FILTHY.

GET IN THE BATH.

DORO (MESS)

KURURI (SPIN)

HA HA!

RIGHT. SORRY, SORRY.

WHAT IS THIS SPACE FOR?

.....

SORRY, SORRY.

BUT IF I STAY ON-SITE, IT'LL GO A LOT FASTER!

ALL RIGHT?

PAN (CLAP)

WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT BUILDING A HOME FOR YOURSELF?

DON'T BE STUPID.

YOU SAID IT WAS JUST A PLACE FOR ME TO OVERSEE YOUR WORK.

WELL, IT'S A SPACE FOR ME TO REST, SO—

IT ACTUALLY DID SPEED UP PROGRESS QUITE A BIT...

...SO I AGREED TO IT UNTIL MY HOME WAS COMPLETE.

THUS, I GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED LIVING WITH HIM.

THANKS FOR THE BATH! THIS FEELS SO GREAT!

BUT I DON'T WANT TO EXHAUST HIM TO DEATH. THAT WOULD MEAN NO HOUSE FOR ME...

...STILL, I MIGHT BE SPOILING HIM, HEATING UP THE BATH FOR HIM.

ほか
HOKA (STEAM)

...!!

ほか
HOKA

NGH...

JUST BE PATIENT UNTIL HE'S DONE...

ZAAAAA (FSHHH)

YES...

ONCE HE'S DONE, I'LL FINALLY HAVE MY OWN PLACE TO MYSELF...

DAY 1,032.

CHAPU (SPLISH)

ちゃぷ？

MIIIN (BZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

MIN

MM?

BUN (WAVE)

BUN

BUN

HEY!

THAT BEAM'S ABOUT TO COME OFF!

LOOK UNDER YOU! UNDER YOU!

HUH? WHAT DID YOU SAY!?

I SAID, LOOK UNDER...

AH!

ZURU (SLIP)

NO!

NOT THAT!

GATA (CLATTER)

DA (DASH)

TSUKI-HIKO!

GATAN (RATTLE)

HE'S GONE ...?

HM?

WHAT IS IT?

S...

WHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE.

STOP SCREW-ING AROUND, YOU PIECE OF CRAP!

HUH...?

HOW CAN A CREATURE AS WEAK AS YOU BE SO CARELESS !?

KURU (SPIN)

NGH!

YOU FOOL!

HE ALMOST DIED! DOESN'T HE UNDERSTAND WHY I'M YELLING AT HIM!?

I SAID...

?

DAH...

ZA (ZSH)

AND...

...DON'T GO BACK UP ON THE ROOF TODAY.

.....

THE TUB.

FILL IT BACK UP.

I HATE IT.

LETTING SOMETHING LIKE THAT MAKE MY BLOOD FREEZE...

I TRULY HATE IT.

UM, ALL RIGHT!

TCH...

DAY 1,058.

I'VE BEEN NEEDING A PICK-ME-UP LIKE THAT ANYWAY.

THAT OUGHT TO MAKE HIM WHIMPER A BIT.

LET'S JUST NOT SPEAK WITH HIM AGAIN TODAY.

RIGHT.

HE'S LATE...!

TSUKIHIKO ALWAYS MADE THE ROUND-TRIP FROM HERE TO HIS HOME IN AROUND THREE HOURS.

HE'S NEVER ONCE FAILED TO RETURN BEFORE SUNDOWN LIKE THIS...

.....

I RAN OUT OF STUFF TO EAT, SO I'M GOING BACK TO GET FOOD. I'LL BE BACK IN THE AFTERNOON.

AND NOW LOOK! IT'S EVENING ALREADY!

HOW FAR IS HE TRAVELING FOR THAT FOOD?

...HE WON'T BE COMING BACK TONIGHT.

I SUP-POSE...

WHAT IS THAT FOOL THINK-ING?

JUST YESTERDAY HE WAS CROWING ABOUT HAVING THIS FINISHED WITHIN THE WEEK!

MAYBE THE WEATHER WAS SO GOOD THAT HE TOOK A NAP SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY...

...HE WOULD HAVE TRIED TO AVOID NIGHTTIME, COMING INTO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE LIKE THIS.

THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT...

.....

AHH...

OR PERHAPS HE'LL COME TRUNDLING BACK AFTER ALL IN A LITTLE WHILE...

AH WELL.

HE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW MORNING.

DID HE RUN AWAY ON ME?

BOSO (WHISPER)

WHY AM I SEARCHING MY MIND FOR REASONS?

IF I'M LOOKING FOR THE MOST PROBABLE CAUSE...

...THEN ISN'T THAT ONE ALREADY OBVIOUS?

YES...

IT'S SIMPLY ABNORMAL, WORKING THREE YEARS FOR ME WITHOUT PAY...

WHAT COULD BE MORE NATURAL THAN RUNNING AWAY...?

I REMEMBER HOW EERIE IT SOUNDED WHEN I HEARD IT.

LET'S SEE...

I THINK IT WAS...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT MAKES HIM TICK.

...HE SAID SOMETHING ODD TO ME AT THE VERY START, DIDN'T HE? WHAT WAS IT?

YES...

I JUST THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO GET A CLOSER LOOK AT YOU...

HEH HEH HEH...

IS HE SOME KIND OF IDIOT!?

OR COULD IT BE THAT HE...

HOW COULD HE SAY SOMETHING SO SHAME-LESS...!?

...ATTRACTED TO ME, OR...?

I MEAN, WAS HE...

.....!

NO, NO, NO, NO!

KAAA (BLUSH)

ナニヲ ナニヲ ナニヲ...

THAT'S INSANE.

HE IS A HUMAN BEING!

BUT HE IS A MAN, AND I...IN ALL LIKELIHOOD... AM A WOMAN.

AND IF HE WANTED TO PEER SO INTENTLY AT ME LIKE THAT, THEN IT MUST MEAN...

AH...

AHHH...

I'D BE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING YOU SAY, STARTING RIGHT NOW.

AH!

SU (SSK)

SO...

SO EVERY-THING UP TO NOW WAS...

ZAN (ZSSH)

NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT, I AM THE FOOL HERE.

WAIT, SO WHEN HE DID THAT, DID IT MEAN...?

AND WHEN HE DID THAT TOO!?

AHH...

WHY IS HE SUCH A FOOL!?

NO...

WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO ME?

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, BEING ALONE HAS BEGUN TO BE A TORMENT.

GET BACK HERE NOW...

...YOU IDIOT.

DAY 1,059.

HIC

HIC

.....

COME ON, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY.

I'M RIGHT HERE, SAFE AND SOUND.

OKAY?

HIC!

.....

NH!

I SURE AM SORRY I'M LATE THOUGH.

THINGS JUST GOT A LITTLE... COMPLICATED, IS ALL.

...WHY ARE YOU SO HURT?

GIKU (SHUDDER)

IT'S JUST...

WHAT?

IS IT SOMETHING YOU CAN'T TELL ME?

UM, NO!

NO, NOT AT ALL.

JIRO (GLARE)

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE MET?

SIGH...

.....

UHMM...

OKAY, THEN...

SAY IT.

BIKU (FLINCH)

URK...

BIKU

!?

HEY, WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU WERE SITTING THERE, DEEP IN THOUGHT, AND I SPOKE UP—

IT'S FINE.

GO ON.

I JUST RECALLED IT YESTERDAY. HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN?

UM...

OKAY. SO...

BACK THEN...

...I WAS ACTUALLY ON MY WAY HOME FROM FIGHTING IN A WAR.

THEY TOLD ME I WASN'T USEFUL FOR ANYTHING IN THE CORPS.

.....

...I THOUGHT YOU WERE, YOU KNOW, KIND OF PRETTY.

AND THEN I SAW YOU, WANDERING AROUND.

SO...

...WHEN YOU SAID TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR YOU, EVEN THOUGH I THOUGHT IT WAS CRAZY...

...IT MADE ME KIND OF... HAPPY.

SO THAT'S HOW I WOUND UP HERE, BUT...

STOP SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT ABOUT ME.

AH-HA-HA! SORRY ABOUT THAT.

IT FELT NICE THAT SOMEONE LIKE ME COULD HELP SOMEONE AS PRETTY AS YOU.

GH...

THANK YOU.

AH...

WHAT!?

BOY, YOU'RE ACTING REALLY STRANGE TODAY.

BUT YESTERDAY I RAN INTO ONE OF THE VILLAGERS, AND...

THEY LEFT BEHIND A DECENT AMOUNT OF MONEY AND LAND, SO I'VE NEVER HAD A PROBLEM STAYING AFLOAT.

SO ANY-WAY...

...MY PARENTS PASSED AWAY WHEN I WAS YOUNG...

...I LOOK A LITTLE OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH COMPARED TO OTHER PEOPLE. SO THEY'VE NEVER TREATED ME ALL THAT WELL.

WELL, YOU KNOW.

AND WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU'RE A VILLAGER TOO, ARE YOU NOT?

WELL, I AM, BUT...

ZAWA (WHOOSH)

JUST FOR THAT...

...THEY DID ALL OF THIS TO YOU?

THE BRUISE ON HIS FACE...

THE MUD HE'S COVERED IN HEAD TO TOE...

...JUST BECAUSE OF THAT?

HUH?

DON'T.

ZA (ZSH)

SU (SHFF)

NO, IT'S FINE.

I MADE IT BACK TODAY IN ONE PIECE, SO...

THE VILLAGERS SHOULD TASTE SOME OF THAT.

DON'T? WHY SHOULDN'T I?

LOOK AT WHAT THEY DID TO YOU!

WELL ...

I MEAN, I DEFINITELY DON'T THINK THEY'RE IN THE RIGHT.

...WHY NOT?

DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU ANGRY?

.....!

THAT'S WHY...

...I DON'T WANT YOU DOING THE SAME THING THEY DO.

TSUKIHIKO LIVING IN THAT WRETCHED PLACE FOR YEARS AND DECADES TO COME...

BUT THINK ABOUT IT...

...HE'S RIGHT. I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO THINK I'M THE SAME AS THEM.

...TREATED ALTERNATELY AS AN IDIOT AND A PUNCHING BAG, DEPENDING ON THEIR WHIMS...

...SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO IRRATIONALLY DESPISE HIM...

IS HE REALLY FINE WITH THIS?

I WANT YOU...

...TO NEVER...

...GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE AGAIN.

WHEN I TOLD HIM TO BUILD A HOME FOR ME...

...I ALSO COMMANDED HIM TO LEAVE ONCE HE WAS DONE.

WHAT AM I TELLING HIM?

GU (CLENCH)

AND YET, LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING TO HIM...

...

HE'S PROVED THAT OVER AND OVER FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS.

I KNOW HE'S THE SORT OF MAN WHO DUTIFULLY KEEPS A PROMISE.

...SORRY.

FORGET ABOUT IT.

PORO (DRIP)

PORO

PORO

PORO

IT FEELS SO LONELY.

SO LONELY THAT IT'S HARD TO BEAR.

I AM SUCH A FOOL.

OH, WHY DID I HAVE TO SAY THAT BACK THEN?

JUST A STUPID, USELESS FOOL.

YES.

I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN ALL ALONG.

BUT I STILL EXPECTED SOMETHING TO CHANGE...AND IT MAKES ME SO ASHAMED.

...I'M SORRY.

WILL YOU BE MY WIFE?

COME ON...

JUST GET MY HOUSE DONE ALREADY.

JUST GET OUT OF MY LIFE.

AND THEN I CAN FINALLY BE ALONE...

...YES.

I'M SORRY.

I GUESS...

...I'VE BROKEN MY PROMISE.

TEARS ARE SOMETHING YOU MAKE WHEN YOU'RE SAD OR IN PAIN.

NOT AT TIMES LIKE THIS. WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME?

YOU FOOL...

KAGEROU
DAZE